



Summer Meal Programs and Farmers Markets

As the demand for fresh, local foods grows across the country, farmer's markets have become an essential part of a large number of communities. Farmers markets connect community members to food vendors in a fun family environment. They are places that encourage people to get fresh air, watch local artists, and eat lunch at one of the food stands.

Promoting summer meals at farmers markets is an innovative way to provide fresh, local food for children and their families.

Go to [USDA and Partner Resources](#).

Opportunity in Tyler, Texas

A local farmer's market director found farmers willing to donate unsold produce from farmers markets to fight food deserts. In collaboration with the Texas Hunger Initiative, cases of unsold produce from farmers markets were given to families at summer meal sites. Families benefited from fresh, local produce at no cost to them. The farmers were happy to donate their unsold produce to help people in the community who did not have easy access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food.

Did you know?

A farmers market can be a great location for serving summer meals! Any farmers market can partner with a sponsor and apply to operate a summer meal site. All that is needed is a safe, supervised place with a seating area for children to eat meals and space to store the food that the sponsor provides. The parents can browse among the vendors and shop for fresh produce while their kids get a healthy meal or snack – great for markets that are partnering with SNAP!



Summer Meals Toolkit

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Farmers markets can make summer meal programs educational and recreational! USDA encourages sites to have fun, with enriching activities such as musical guests, face painting, trivia games, or jump rope, in addition to feeding kids.

USDA Resources

To learn more about getting farmer's markets involved, learn more about the Farm to School Program!

- **Farm to School Coordinators**

Contact your State's Farm to School coordinator. A number of States have farm to school coordinators in their State departments of agriculture or education. In addition, throughout the country numerous public and private organizations support farm to school efforts by offering training, technical assistance, funding and other support services.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/state-contacts>

- **Know Your Farmer Know Your Food Compass Map**

Use this map to explore local food projects and identify potential sites, vendors, and other partnerships. The map shows local food projects funded with Federal dollars. Project funders include Housing and Urban Development, Department of Treasury, and USDA's Rural Development.

<http://www.usda.gov/maps/maps/kyfcompassmap.htm>

- **Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs**

Discover in this guide the many strategies that sponsors can use in the procurement process to purchase local foods.

http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_Procuring_Local_Foods_Child_Nutrition_Prog_Guide.pdf

- **Finding, Buying, and Serving Local Foods Webinar Series**

Listen to recordings of past webinars, and learn how schools and sponsors can obtain local foods.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/webinars>





- **Farm to School Fact Sheets**

Find out some of the ways to bring local products into summer meal programs.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/fact-sheets>

- **Farm to School E-Newsletter**

Sign-up for e-mail updates to read about USDA's Farm to School activities, and check for stories about summer meal sponsors. We may just be highlighting YOUR program this summer!

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USFNS/subscriber/new?preferences=true>

Partner Organization Resources

- **Food Research and Action Center**

Fresh from the Farm: Using Local Foods in the Afterschool and Summer Nutrition Programs

Follow this step-by-step guide to incorporating local foods into summer meals.

<http://frac.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/produceguide.pdf>

- **Local Harvest**

Find local farms and other information about local food in your community.

<http://www.localharvest.org/>

For Additional Information

Farmers markets have the ability to make positive change at the grassroots level to decrease childhood hunger. Review these ideas and adopt the strategies that seem reasonable to you and compatible with your Program. Sponsors and the general public should contact the appropriate State agency for additional guidance. State agencies should contact their FNS Regional Office for additional guidance.

List of FNS Regional Offices: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-regional-offices>

List of State Agencies: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>

USDA and its recipient institutions share responsibility for compliance and oversight to ensure good stewardship of Federal funds.



Summer Meals Toolkit

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.